

REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated December 24, 2008. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

As outlined above, claims 18-21, 27-31, and 33 stand for consideration in this application, wherein claims 11-17, 25, 26, and 32 are being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 22-24 stand withdrawn from further consideration in this application.

In response to the telephonic inquiry by Applicants' representative, the Examiner admitted that the statements on line 1 of Section 7 on page 3 and line 1 of Section 8 on page 9 of the Office Action include typographical errors. The Examiner corrected those statements in the Office Action as follows.

Re: line 1 of Section 7 on page 3: Claims 11-17, 25, 26, and 32 are rejected

Re: line of Section 8 on page 9: Claims 18-21, 27-31, and 33 are allowed.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection

Claims 11-17, 25, 26, and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Harris et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,900,648) in view of Arai et al. (JP 2000-150792).

As mentioned above, claims 11-17, 25, 26, and 32 are being canceled, and therefore, the rejection of 11-17, 25, 26, and 32 is moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

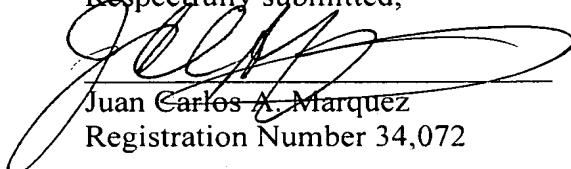
Applicants thank the Examiner for holding that claims 18-21, 27-31, and 33 are allowed.

Conclusion

In light of the Amendments and Remarks, Applicants respectfully request early and favorable action with regard to the present application, and a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims is earnestly solicited.

Favorable reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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